

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8723

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 PRETORIA 4628

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, PFOR, WA

SUBJECT: CURRENT SITUATION IN NAMIBIA

REF: PRETORIA 4501

1. SUMMARY: DURING A BRIEF VISIT TO WINDHOEK AUGUST 31-SEPTEMBER 1, EMBASSY, DEPARTMENT AND USUN OFFICERS MET WITH A VARIETY OF NAMIBIAN LEADERS, INCLUDING TURNHALLE AND SWAPO, TO ASSESS THE CURRENT SITUATION IN THE TERRITORY. POLITICAL LEADERS AND INFORMED OBSERVERS OF ALL POINTS OF VIEW APPEAR TO BELIEVE THE INITIATIVE OF THE FIVE HAS LITTLE CHANCE FOR SUCCESS. TURNHALLE LEADERS CONTINUE TO PUSH FORWARD WITH THEIR OWN PLANS, WHILE MUCH ATTENTION IS CENTERED ON THE NEW ADMINISTRATOR-GENERAL. THERE IS A COMMON BELIEF IN WINDHOEK THAT HE WILL ACT SLOWLY TO REPEAL DISCRIMINATORY AND RE-CONFIDENTIAL

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STRICTIVE LEGISLATION. THE RECENT VIOLENCE IN SOME BLACK AREAS IS NOT VIEWED AS PARTICULARLY SERIOUS OR SIGNIFICANT, ALTHOUGH THERE ARE FEARS THAT IT COULD ESCALATE IF AND WHEN THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN GETS UNDERWAY. END SUMMARY.

2. OFFICERS OF EMBASSY PRETORIA, USUN, AND IO/UNP VISITED WINDHOEK AUGUST 31 - SEPTEMBER 1 AND MET WITH TUNHALLE AND

SWAPO LEADERS AND WITH A NUMBER OF INFORMED OBSERVERS. INTERNAL SWAPO LEADER DANIEL TJONGARERO TOLD THE GROUP SWAPO BELIEVES THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO PROCEED WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A TURNHALLE SOLUTION. HE POINTED TO THE CREATION OF ETHNIC BATTALIONS AND NEW SECOND TIER ETHNIC GOVERNMENTS TO SUPPORT THIS CONCLUSION. SWAPO, HE SAID, DOES NOT EXPECT THE NEW ADMINISTRATOR-GENERAL TO IMPLEMENT MEANINGFUL REFORMS OR TO LIFT RESTRICTIONS ON SWAPO. ON SPECIFIC SETTLEMENT PROPOSALS, TJONGARERO ECHOED THE PARTY LINE, ALTHOUGH HE DID SHOW A MEASURE OF FLEXIBILITY ON SOME ISSUES. UNDER QUESTIONING HE CONCEDED THAT IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE TO "NEUTRALIZE" SOUTH AFRICAN TROOPS IN SOME WAY WITHOUT ALL OF THEM (WHICH HE ESTIMATED AT 30,000-50,000) HAVING TO LEAVE PRIOR TO THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN. HE DID NOT, HOWEVER, COMMIT HIMSELF ON THIS POINT. HE DID SAY THAT SWAPO WOULD BE WILLING TO ACHIEVE INDEPENDENCE WITHOUT WALVIS BAY, AND "LIBERATE" THAT ENCLAVE LATER.

3. MEANWHILE, TURNHALLE LEADERS ARE PROCEEDING AS IF THEY EXPECT AN EARLY ELECTION. DIRK MUDGE, CHAIRMAN OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE TURNHALLE, RECENTLY MADE A PUBLIC STATEMENT THAT TURNHALLE COULD NOT WAIT BEYOND THE END OF SEPTEMBER FOR THE WESTERN INITIATIVE TO SUCCEED BEFORE PROCEEDING WITH ITS OWN PLANS, (REFTEL). HE TOLD THE VISITING STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICERS, HOWEVER, THAT THIS WAS NOT AN ULTIMATUM SINCE TURNHALLE IS NOT IN A POSITION TO PROCEED

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UNILATERALLY, BUT RATHER A STATEMENT OF HIS CONVICTION THAT AT PRESENT THE TERRITORY IS BEING HURT BADLY BY THE EFFECTS OF POLITICAL UNCERTAINTY. INVESTMENT IS DECLINING, THE ECONOMY IS SAGGING, AND WHITES ARE EMIGRATING. MUDGE BELIEVES THAT THE ONLY WAY TO END THIS SITUATION, WHICH IS HELPING SWAPO AS WELL AS HURTING THE TERRITORY, IS TO ANNOUNCE A FIRM PLAN AND TIMETABLE FOR THE FUTURE. THE FIVE POWER INITIATIVE COULD BE SUCH A PLAN AND THE TIMETABLE COULD EXTEND WELL INTO 1978 AS LONG AS THE UNCERTAINTY IS ENDED. HE BELIEVED THAT A GOVERNMENT MUST BE ELECTED AND IN PLACE BY JUNE 1978 IF NAMIBIA IS TO BECOME INDEPENDENT BEFORE THE END OF 1978. HE SAW NO NEED FOR A LENGTHY PERIOD OF CAMPAIGNING. MUDGE REMAINED PESSIMISTIC ABOUT THE CHANCES FOR SUCCESS OF THE WESTERN INITIATIVE, BELIEVING THAT SWAPO WOULD NOT AGREE TO CONTEST A FREE AND FAIR ELECTION. HE WAS INSISTENT THAT SOUTH AFRICAN TROOPS MUST REMAIN IN THE TERRITORY TO PROTECT IT FROM THE TERRORIST AND CUBAN THREAT. HE DID, HOWEVER, DEMONSTRATE A DEGREE OF FLEXIBILITY ON THE TYPES OF CONTROLS THAT COULD BE PLACED ON SA TROOPS IN THE TERRITORY. HE DID NOT REJECT THE IDEA OF A PHASED REDUCTION OR OF CONFINING TROOPS TO BASE. HE ALSO APPEARED INTRIGUED BY THE IDEA OF "THREE MEN IN A JEEP" AND WONDERED ALOUD WHY THIS HAD NOT

BEEN SUGGESTED. OTHER TURNHALLE LEADERS, INCLUDING HERERO
CHIEF CLEMENS KAPUUO AND COLORED LEADER ANDREW KLOPPERS WERE
EQUALLY OR MORE INSISTENT THAT SOUTH AFRICAN TROOPS REMAIN.
THEY ALSO CITED THE CUBAN AS WELL AS THE SWAPO "THREAT".

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4. SEVERAL JOURNALISTS AS WELL AS THE GERMAN VICE CONSUL
BELIEVED THE TURNHALLE GROUP WAS MOVING FORWARD AS IF EXPECTING
AN INTERNAL SETTLEMENT. IN ADDITION TO THE FORMATION OF ETHNIC
BATTALIONS (CALLED BY ONE OBSERVER "CIVIL WAR ARMIES" AND
BY ANOTHER "TURNHALLE ARMIES") AND SECOND TIER GOVERNMENTS,
THESE OBSERVERS POINT TO THE "REPORT-BACK" MEETINGS TURNHALLE
LEADERS UNDERTOOK IN OVAMBO DURING THE LAST HALF OF AUGUST.
THESE MEETINGS WERE BASICALLY EXERCISES IN ELECTIONEERING,
WITH TURNHALLE LEADERS EXPOUNDING ON THE ADVANTAGES OF
INDEPENDENCE AND EXPLAINING HOW A TURNHALLE GOVERNMENT WOULD
END DISCRIMINATION AND PRESERVE SELF-DETERMINATION. THE
MEETINGS REPORTEDLY MET WITH MIXED SUCCESS; ALTHOUGH AUDIENCES
WERE NOT ENTHUSIASTIC, MOST WERE NOT HOSTILE. SOME TURNHALLE
LEADERS, SUCH AS KAPUUO AND KLOPPERS CLAIMED THAT TURNHALLE
GAINED CONSIDERABLE SUPPORT FROM THE REPORT-BACK EFFORT, BUT
MORE IMPARTIAL OBSERVERS DOUBTED THEIR IMPACT. DIRK MUDG
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ADMITTED THAT THE TURNHALLE HAD PROBABLY NOT GAINED POPULARITY, BUT BELIEVED THE EXERCISE WAS USEFUL IN SHOWING THE OVAMBOS THAT AN ALTERNATIVE TO SWAPO AND THE SAG DID EXIST. THE MEETINGS ALSO AFFORDED TURNHALLE LEADERS THE CHANCE TO HEAR LOCAL GRIEVANCES AND MAKE REPRESENTATIONS TO THE TERRITORIAL ADMINISTRATION ON BEHALF OF THE LOCAL POPULATIONS WITH REGARD TO LOCAL PROBLEMS. TURNHALLE PARTICIPANTS WERE REPORTEDLY FERRIED IN SADF HELICOPTERS AND PROTECTED BY GOVERNMENT FORCES. WHILE DIRK MUDGE DENIED THAT THE TRIPS WERE SAG-FUNDED (THE MONEY, HE SAID, CAME FROM PRIVATE CONTRIBUTIONS), KLOPPERS AND KAPUUNO WERE EVASIVE ABOUT THEIR SOURCE OF FUNDS. OPPOSITION GROUPS, PARTICULARLY SWAPO, WERE BITTER THAT TURNHALLE MEETINGS IN OVAMBO SHOULD BE SAG-SUPPORTED WHILE SWAPO MEETINGS THERE ARE PROHIBITED.

5. THE CONSTITUTIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE TURNHALLE WILL MEET AGAIN THE WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 5 TO DISCUSS WHAT DIRK MUDGE CALLED "CONSTITUTIONAL AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS". PRESUMABLY THE FULL COMMITTEE WILL REVIEW PROGRESS MADE BY THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE APPOINTED IN JULY (PRETORIA 3771) TO RECOMMEND REVISIONS TO THE TURNHALLE DRAFT CONSTITUTION AND PROPOSALS ON THE POLITICAL ORGANIZATION OF THE TURNHALLE GROUP. ACCORDING TO MUDGE, ONE NEW CONSTITUTIONAL PROPOSAL WOULD ADD A TWELFTH GROUP TO THE TURNHALLE'S ELEVEN GROUPS OF ETHNIC REPRESENTATIVES. THIS WOULD BE AN OPEN GROUP, AND ANY PERSON PREFERRING NOT TO ASSOCIATE HIMSELF WITH AN ETHNIC GROUP FOR ELECTORAL PURPOSES WOULD BE FREE TO ELECT REPRESENTATIVES TO THIS GROUPS. TURNHALLE HOPES THAT THIS WILL PROVIDE AN EFFECTIVE COUNTER ARGUMENT TO CLAIMS THAT TURNHALLE IS FORCING ETHNICITY ON UNWILLING CITIZENS.

6. THE PRO-SAG LEADERS ALSO EXPECT TO DISCUSS THE FORMATION OF A TURNHALLE ALLIANCE OF POLITICAL PARTIES WITH A VIEW TO

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THE FUTURE ELECTIONS. AS REPORTED REFTTEL, IT IS NOT FORESEEN THAT A SINGLE MULTI-RACIAL TURNHALLE PARTY WILL RESULT. MUDGE TOLD US THAT THE NATIONAL PARTY OF SWA WILL BREAK FROM THE NATIONAL PARTY OF SA AT THE FORMER'S PARTY CONGRESS IN WINDHOEK IN LATE SEPTEMBER. THE CONSTITUTIONAL COMMITTEE MAY ALSO CONSIDER SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE NEW ADMINISTRATOR-GENERAL (AG) ABOUT REMOVING OR CHANGING DISCRIMINATORY OR OTHER UNSUITABLE LAWS AND REGULATIONS. TURNHALLE CRITICS EXPLAIN THIS AS AN ATTEMPT TO CLAIM CREDIT FOR ACTIONS THE AG WOULD HAVE TO TAKE IN ANY CASE.

7. MUCH INTEREST IN WINDHOEK WAS CENTERED ON THE SEPTEMBER 1 ARRIVAL OF THE NEW AG, JUSTICE M.T. STEYN. STEYN MADE TWO PUBLIC STATEMENTS THE DAY OF HIS ARRIVAL IN WINDHOEK, ONE AT WINDHOEK AIRPORT AND ONE THE SAME EVENING AT THE OPENING OF THE WINDHOEK SHOW. IN THE INITIAL STATEMENT HE TOLD THE PRESS THAT HE WANTED TO SECURE FREE, UNIMPEDED GENERAL ELECTIONS, AND PROMISED HIS OWN "ABSOLUTE NEUTRALITY". HE ALSO ANNOUNCED HIS INTENTION TO TRAVEL WIDELY IN SOUTH WEST AFRICA TO ACQUAINT HIMSELF WITH THE COUNTRY AND ITS "PEOPLES". IN HIS EVENING STATEMENT, STEYN REITERATED THAT HIS MAIN TASK DURING THE NEXT SIXTEEN MONTHS WAS TO CREATE CONDITIONS FOR A FREE ELECTION AND TO ACT AS AN "INDEPENDENT OFFICER" IN THE PROCESS LEADING TOWARD INDEPENDENCE. HE EXPANDED THAT THIS WOULD REQUIRE NEW ELECTORAL LEGISLATION, AND THE REPEAL OR AMENDMENT OF "CERTAIN EXISTING MEASURES". HE SAID SWAPO WOULD BE INVITED TO PARTICIPATE, BUT WARNED THAT THE CAMPAIGN WOULD HAVE TO BE LAWFUL AND PEACEFUL. HE CONCLUDED BY SAYING THAT A "REASONABLE OPPORTUNITY" FOR ORGANIZING AND ELECTIONEERING WOULD BE AFFORDED TO ALL CONTESTANTS BUT THAT THE PREPARATION FOR AND CONDUCT OF THE ELECTIONS WOULD BE INITIATED AND CARRIED THROUGH WITH "DELIBERATE SPEED AND UNPERTURBED FAITH".

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8. IN A SUBSEQUENT INTERVIEW CARRIED IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN PRESS SEPT 7, STEYN SAID THAT SWAPO'S REFUSAL TO PARTICIPATE "CANNOT HAVE THE EFFECT OF A VETO ON THE ELECTIONS". STEYN SAID THAT TURNHALLE MEMBERS WERE STILL AIMING AT THE END OF NEXT YEAR FOR INDEPENDENCE, BUT THE DATE WAS FLEXIBLE. HE ALSO REVEALED THAT THE PACE OF PROGRESS TOWARDS ORGANIZING ELECTIONS DEPENDS ON HOW SOON THE UN SECRETARY-GENERAL SHOULD DECIDE WHETHER TO APPOINT A UN REPRESENTATIVE TO WORK WITH THE ADMINISTRATOR-GENERAL AND HIS STAFF. HE REPORTEDLY STRESSED, HOWEVER, THAT IF THE UN DECIDED AGAINST SENDING A REPRESENTATIVE, HE WOULD GO AHEAD ANYWAY WITH PREPARATIONS.

9. STEYN AND HIS PERSONAL STAFF, HEADED BY JOHN VIAL, A DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS LEGAL EXPERT, ARE OCCUPYING THE TOP TWO FLOORS OF THE KALAHARI SANDS HOTEL AT A REPORTED COST OF R18,000 A MONTH. WHILE THERE ARE SOME HOPES THAT
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STEYN WILL ACT QUICKLY AND DECISIVELY ON THE WHOLE RANGE OF REPRESSIVE AND DISCRIMINATORY LEGISLATION, THERE IS LITTLE EXPECTATION THAT HE WILL IMMEDIATELY MAKE SWEEPING CHANGES. OBSERVERS IN WINDHOEK EXPECT STEYN TO DISMANTLE THE MIXED MARRIAGES AND IMMORALITY ACTS (THE LATTER IS ALREADY NO LONGER ENFORCED IN WINDHOEK) AND OTHER PETTY APARTHEID LEGISLATION WHICH CAN BE CHANGED AT NO COST AND WITH LIMITED CONTROVERSY. MORE SIGNIFICANT AND CONTROVERSIAL LEGISLATION, INCLUDING INFLUX CONTROL, MIXED SCHOOLS AND RESIDENTIAL AREAS, AND THE EMERGENCY REGULATIONS IN OVAMBO (PROCLAMATION R17) ARE EXPECTED TO REMAIN IN PLACE FOR SOME TIME.

10. THE RECENT DISTURBANCES IN SOME NAMIBIAN TOWNSHIPS, INCLUDING KATATURA AND TSUMEB ARE NOT REGARDED AS PARTICULARLY SERIOUS OR SIGNIFICANT BY EITHER SWAPO OR THE TURNHALLE. THE MOST SERIOUS OF THE INCIDENTS, IN KATATURA, OUTSIDE WINDHOEK, APPARENTLY OCCURRED WHEN SUPPORTERS OF CLEMENS KAPUUNO'S UNITED DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL ORGANIZATION (UNDO) SOUGHT TO DISRUPT A SWAPO RALLY ON NAMIBIA DAY. IN ANOTHER INCIDENT UNDO SUPPORTERS CLASHED WITH SWANU MEMBERS. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT SUCH INCIDENTS COULD ESCALATE WHEN AND IF AN ELECTION CAMPAIGN GETS UNDERWAY.
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